

**Minutes for the State of North Carolina  
Forensic Science Advisory Board Meeting  
(NCFSAB)**

Meeting – July 22, 2014  
North Carolina State Crime Laboratory  
Raleigh, NC

**Board members present:** North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Director John Byrd, Kermit Channell (Chair), Michael Coble, Adam Becnel, Tracey Dawson Cruz, David Hinks, Mike Jiroutek, Amanda Julian, Tim Kupferschmid, Alka Lohmann, Peter Marone, Christopher Palenik, Bethany Pridgen, Deborah Radisch, Ronald Singer

**Board members not present:** Ja'Neisha Huntley

**Others in attendance:** Mark Boodee, John Dilday, Ann Hamlin, Judge Joe John, Zack Kallenbach, Deena Koontz, Chuck McClelland, Karen Morrow, Elizabeth Patel, Joseph Reavis, Timothy Suggs, Pete Ware (NCSCCL); Stormie Forte (SBI and State Crime Lab Ombudsman); Sarah Rackley Olson, Katie Dunn (Office of Indigent Defense Services); John Bason, Forensic Science Advisory Board Counsel Matthew Boyatt, North Carolina State Crime Lab Counsel Joy Strickland (NC DOJ); John Neuner (ASCLD/LAB)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kermit Channell at 9:02 AM. As the first order of business the board approved the minutes from the previous meeting.

Following adoption of the minutes, new board member Adam Becnel was sworn in by Judge Joe John.

John Byrd began his Director's Report by noting that he had assumed the position of NCSCCL Director on June 2nd. Director Byrd stated that former director Judge Joe John had been a great asset during the transition period and had agreed to stay on to represent the NCSCCL's interests at the North Carolina General Assembly.

Director Byrd also announced that Elizabeth Patel would be taking over as Forensic Sciences Manager at the Triad Regional Lab as of August 1st.

Judge John presented a Legislative Update outlining NCSCCL-related items in the Governor's proposed budget and the proposed budgets of the NC House and Senate. Separate legislation moving through the General Assembly would allow NCSCCL analysts to provide court testimony via video if the defense does not object, although the proposed budgets do not include funding.

Joy Strickland noted that NCSCCL data is now being compared to NC Administrative Office of the Courts data to identify instances where no further lab work is required because cases have been closed.

Director Byrd began a slide show, Strategic Vision and Plan for Moving Forward, highlighting his leadership philosophy and his emphasis on teamwork.

The Director's Report was paused for a special presentation. John Neuner, Executive Director of American Society of Crime Lab Director Lab Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB) presented Director Byrd, former Director Judge John and Attorney General Roy Cooper with a certificate formalizing ISO/IEC 17025 international accreditation of the Crime Lab.

This recognition, coupled with the ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation by Forensic Quality Services in June, 2013, makes North Carolina's lab the only state system in the nation to be dually accredited. The NCSCL is the 12th largest facility accredited by ASCLD/LAB, and the 3rd largest state lab.

Neuner noted that there are some misconceptions about what accreditation accomplishes. He said it doesn't mean that there will never be another problem in a lab. Instead, accreditation confirms the presence of a quality system with reviews and checks that are ongoing.

In his remarks Attorney General Cooper thanked the FSAB and praised the work of NCSCL employees and leadership, stating "I have confidence in the people in this room."

After adjourning for a brief photo session to commemorate the certification, the Director's Report continued at 10:40 AM.

Director Byrd noted the challenges of administrating an NCSCL staff of whom 87% are "Millennials" (born after 1984), who typically change jobs many times over the course of their careers. Retaining their skills is one of the primary goals of the teambuilding philosophy. Encouraging communications between different sections of the lab ("cross-talk") is another goal to address employee attrition.

Restructuring the lab is also on the agenda. Trace Evidence has been merged with Firearms to create a "Physical Evidence" unit.

Director Byrd noted that when the lab was associated with the SBI, the SBI provided a variety of services including security for the lab and Human Resources functions. Now that the lab has been separated from SBI (and now that SBI is being moved to DPS), the lab is having to address those issues. He also noted that he has altered the organizational chart of the lab so that he has fewer "direct reports."

Deena Koontz gave an update on the planning for the new western lab, including the challenges of hiring new staff. Timothy Suggs spoke on the "Foresight" project, a collaboration with West Virginia University which is aimed at providing more detailed information to the General Assembly about how long various lab tasks take to complete and how much they cost. Suggs also gave an update on Lean 6 Sigma. Ann Hamlin spoke about the RFP for outsourcing toxicology samples for testing. Two vendors have responded to the RFP. Chuck McClelland spoke regarding a customer satisfaction survey on Google. Responders will have 1 month to submit their comments. Also, the lab is preparing a "welcome" packet (with information about the area) for new hires.

In response to a question from Chairman Channel regarding how information about changes at the lab get pushed down to lower level staff, it was noted that a Staff Update Brief is available to all online.

Judge John noted that the board's letter supporting additional staffing and more competitive pay for lab staff was effective in part because it is seen as coming from an independent group rather than from the lab itself.

Former Chairman Pete Marone spoke with regard to a bill before Congress regarding “rapid DNA boxes”, stating that aggressive marketing by industry was misleading Congress to believe that the legislation could help reduce the backlog of untested rape kits across the country. Marone stated his belief that board members and other interested parties should contact their elected representatives to say “it won’t work” and that “there will be a loss of confidence in the system when this crashes.”

Chairman Channell explained that board members would be meeting individually and informally in small groups with lab staff after the lunch break.

Before adjournment, Board Counsel Matthew Boyatt reminded members that their meetings with staff after lunch did not constitute a reconvening of the board under the state’s Open Meetings Act, and that board members were not to conduct any business (discuss, deliberate, or vote) during these informal meetings.

The board’s next meeting is scheduled for October 28th, 2014. Agenda items will include a Lean 6 Sigma update and a post-legislative session review.

Chairman Channell noted the desire for the board to hold a future meeting near each of the other NC labs.

The board selected January 27th, 2015 as the date for the following meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:01PM.